

**HELP FOR WOMEN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF ABUSE***McGuinty Government Improves Services For Victims Of Domestic Violence*

NEWS

April 17, 2008

Victims of domestic violence in Ontario will get help faster and be better protected from further harm through \$8.2 million in new provincial funding.

A new \$1.7 million Early Victim Contact initiative will mean same-day help for victims as part of Ontario's specialized court program for domestic violence cases. Twenty-three new staff will be hired across the province as part of the [Victim/Witness Assistance Program](#). This program provides specially trained victim services workers, Crown prosecutors, police and others to work with victims, community agencies and the courts to break the cycle of violence.

The government also announced an additional \$6.5 million to support victims of domestic violence, who are overwhelmingly women:

- [The Partner Assault Response Program](#) is receiving \$2 million more to support victims by holding offenders accountable through court-ordered counselling and education for offenders.
- [The Supervised Access Program](#) will have its funding doubled with \$4 million extra to facilitate child custody exchanges and visits when there is a safety concern.
- The Bail Safety Program is receiving \$500,000 in permanent funding to enable integrated teams of justice professionals to improve victim safety in domestic violence bail hearings.

**QUOTES**

"Our goal is to break the cycle of violence while providing victims of woman abuse with the support they need," said Attorney General Chris Bentley. "These services are essential to helping victims of domestic violence rebuild their lives."

"These programs are helping women who have suffered from domestic violence move forward to a brighter future," said Deb Matthews, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues.

"I fully support the Attorney General's initiative to ensure women who are being abused by their partners get the earliest possible intervention," said Deborah Sinclair, a social worker and consultant in violence against women issues. "The first 24 hours are critical to breaking an abused woman's isolation - the sooner she gets supports, the better. These are among the services that abused women and their children need to live lives free from violence."

**QUICK FACTS**

- April 13 -19, 2008, is [Victims of Crime Awareness Week](#).
- [Ontario's Domestic Violence Court Program](#) operates in all 54 court districts – it is the biggest program of its kind in Canada. Victims who participate say they feel better served by the justice system.
- Surveys show that over 90 per cent of Victim/Witness Assistance Program clients are satisfied with the services.

## LEARN MORE

Learn about the [Victim/Witness Assistance Program](#). This information is available in [16 languages](#).

E-mail or talk to someone to find out how you can [volunteer](#) to help victims of crime in your community through Ontario Volunteer Centres.

Access [help](#) that is available to women who have been assaulted.

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